

From the Editor

AS of this writing, preparations continue for the likelihood of war with Iraq. To provide you with exclusive coverage of our Army's preparations for war, we sent veteran **Soldiers** correspondents Heike Hasenauer and Steve Harding to Kuwait, where they were given unprecedented access to U.S. forces.

In "Buildup in the Gulf," Heike and Steve capture the essence of the scale and complexity of preparations for war. Their words and images freeze that moment in time before combat when soldiers experience a combination of uncertainty and exhilaration in a place far, far from home.

To help track ongoing developments in the Middle East, in this issue we've included a handy **Soldiers** Situation Map. Modeled after a hurricane-tracking map, on one side you'll find the entire Persian Gulf area of operations, along with suggested Web sites for keeping up with the latest developments. On the reverse is a map of the world.

As always, we here at **Soldiers** hope you find this issue interesting and informative.

John C. Duttelle

Spiritual Food

WHETHER intentional or not, in your December issue you discussed food both spiritual ("Serving God and Country") and physical ("From Horse Blood to Hot Pockets").

Both kinds are what soldier fitness is all about. The Army is doing a great job of feeding its force.

*Chaplain (LTC) John D. Griffith, USAR
Des Moines, Iowa*

Lacrossed Signals

I WAS delighted to see some photos from the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., area in your December "Sharp Shooters" section — especially a picture of a member of the women's lacrosse team of my alma mater, Loyola College.

However, your caption erroneously identified the two players in the picture as "high school lacrosse players." Both players are collegiate-level, and the field they were playing on is located on Loyola's campus on the northern edge of Baltimore.

Loyola College has an outstanding Army ROTC training program and the women's and men's lacrosse programs are perennial powerhouses in Division I play.

It was great to see a Greyhound player in **Soldiers** magazine, but I couldn't let the caption slide.

*CPT Charles A. Musante
Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.*

Thanks for the correction. As we've said in the past, we assume that the captions for photos provided to us by non-staff photographers are correct. When they aren't, we're always glad when

Awesome Almanac

I AM an ROTC instructor at Northeastern University in Boston, Mass.

I recently received copies of the 2002 Almanac and have found it to be an outstanding teaching aid for new cadets, as well as an excellent recruiting tool for new cadets.

I'd like to request 30 additional copies of the Almanac, if they are available. These will be used as study guides for new cadets and as recruiting tools.

Please let me know if you can fill this request.

*CPT Nathan Gruver
via e-mail*

Thanks for the kind words, and your extra copies are on the way.

I RECEIVED a copy of the 2003 Almanac today and, as usual, it is an excellent product and ready reference.

I do have one small correction, however: The caption for photo 4 on page 40 in "This Is Our Army" identifies the non-American soldiers as Czechs. While the training area was in the Czech Republic, the non-American soldiers are Polish, not Czech.

*LTC Evan Miller (Ret.)
Versailles, Ky.*

someone can set us — and the original photographer — straight.

Low on the Pole...

THE November article "Updating the OER System" was very interesting.

However, I am troubled that the author used the term "totem pole" to end his article. There are many native Americans in the military who do not like this reference.

*Russell J Bagley
via e-mail*

Not Star Trek

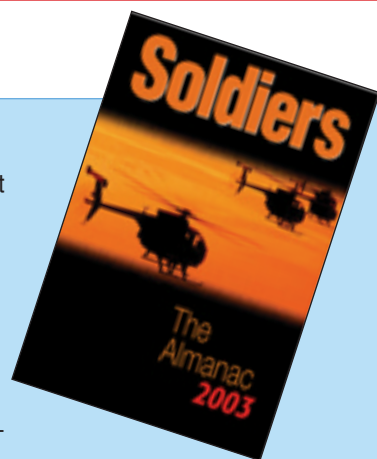
IMAGINE my embarrassment when I saw the cover of

October's issue. It seems to me that a contractor wants to make some money on a "cool look" that is based on some misconception of the Army's future "Star Trek" warrior.

Maybe the guy in the cover shot is playing laser tag or paintball, but his helmet and the other parts of his "uniform" have no realistic role in a real infantry unit.

I spent four years in the infantry and I would never wear that helmet. I agree with the need for taking advantage of our technology, but we can go too far. Don't give some contractor the satisfaction of selling the Army useless junk.

*CPT Darin Gaub
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.*



Wildfire Unit

AFTER reading the October article on the wildfire-fighting operations undertaken by the soldiers of the Oregon National Guard, I couldn't help notice a reference at the very end of the article to an active-duty battalion from Fort Riley, Kan. In case you were unable to locate the name of that battalion, it was the 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery.

CPT Richard D. Wellman Jr.
via e-mail

Service Flags

WE'VE received many letters and e-mails noting that the Service Flags featured in our July issue cannot, as the author implied, be ordered online from the manufacturer, Annin & Company. When contacted, the firm suggested that customers order the flags

locally, or by calling the American Legion at (888) 453-4466.

Why SDAP?

AS of Oct. 1 the Army has granted increased Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) for career counselors.

The U.S. Total Army Personnel Command Web site states that: "SDAP is a monthly incentive to enlisted soldiers who have assignments that are extremely demanding or require a high degree of responsibility." So, let me see if I understand this. A career counselor can get almost as much SDAP as a drill sergeant or an airborne, ranger or special forces soldier?

I've been a drill sergeant for two years and a member of the 82nd Airborne Division for 12 years, and I do not under-

stand why a career counselor should receive an additional \$220 per month. Is their job really that demanding?

Name withheld by request

No Bosnia Medal?

IT is amazing that the Defense Department has produced a campaign medal for those who served in Kosovo, yet has forgotten those who have served in Bosnia.

What makes Kosovo duty more of a priority for a campaign medal? From what I saw when I was in Bosnia with SFOR, and from what was briefed to me by those who went to Kosovo, they are pretty much the same as far as mission tasks, schedules,

environment and dangers.

I think it's time for our leaders to give service members who have done time for IFOR and SFOR what they deserve — a Bosnia campaign medal.

SPC John A. Clements
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Online Privilege

I RETIRED from the Army in 1991. Until today, I had only seen **Soldiers** magazine very infrequently.

The online version allows me the privilege (yes, privilege) of again reading your magazine on a regular basis.

Thank you!

SFC Dan Mills (Ret.)
via e-mail

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